

Message Text

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21

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 COME-00 TRSE-00 EB-07 CIEP-01 LAB-01

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6070

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 15523

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, UK

SUBJECT: LABOR PARTY CONFERENCE

REF: A) LONDON 14983; B) LONDON 15228

SUMMARY: NOVEMBER 27-30 LABOR PARTY CONFERENCE PROMISES
TO BE LATEST ROUND IN LONG-STANDING POWER STRUGGLE
BETWEEN PARTY'S RIGHT- AND LEFT-WINGS. COMPRESSED TIME-
FRAME AND PRESSING ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS SHOULD ALLOW
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MODERATES TO MINIMIZE CHANCES OF OPEN SPLIT IN PARTY.

IMPORTANT SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES ARE EXPECTED TO INCLUDE:EEC;
TERRORISM; SOCIAL CONTRACT; AND DEFENSE REVIEW. END
SUMMARY

1. ANNUAL LABOR PARTY CONFERENCE OPENS IN LONDON NOVEMBER 27 AND WILL CONTINUE THROUGH NOVEMBER 30. IT IS EXPECTED TO HIGHLIGHT CHRONIC RIGHT/LEFT DIVISIONS IN LABOR PARTY WHICH HAVE RECENTLY BEEN INTENSIFIED BY WILSON'S ASSERTION OF COLLECTIVE CABINET RESPONSIBILITY AND LEFT-WING'S COUNTER ARGUMENT THAT A LABOR GOVERNMENT MUST BE ACCOUNTABLE TO PARTY CONFERENCE AND NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NEC) (REF A). THIS DEBATE WAS GIVEN FURTHER IMPETUS OVER WEEKEND BY EDUCATION SECRETARY REG PRENTICE, WHO CLAIMED THAT MODERATES WERE FIRMLY IN CONTROL OF PARLIAMENTARY LABOR PARTY (PLP) AND GOVERNMENT, BUT THAT THEY WOULD HAVE TO REDOUBLE THEIR EFFORTS TO KEEP PARTY ON MIDDLE ROAD BETWEEN CONSERVATISM ON THE ONE HAND AND MARXISM ON THE OTHER. PRENTICE ALSO FIRMLY REJECTED LEFT-WING THESIS THAT LABOR PARTY CONSTITUTION REQUIRES LABOR GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY TO PARTY APPARATUS, CALLING THIS IDEA A "FICTION" AND THE PARTY CONSTITUTION AN "HISTORICAL CURIOSITY" IN THIS RESPECT.

2. PARTY CONFERENCE, BECAUSE OF ITS TRUNCATED FORM, IS WITHOUT FORMAL AGENDA AND WILL PERMIT ONLY A LIMITED NUMBER OF FORMAL SPEECHES (SEE BELOW). FORMAT CURRENTLY GIVES PRIORITY TO DEBATE ON RESTRUCTURING PARTY ORGANIZATION, BUT WILL PERMIT "EMERGENCY RESOLUTIONS" TO BE OFFERED EACH DAY FOLLOWING DEBATE ON REORGANIZATION. LENGTH OF SESSIONS, MOREOVER, WILL BE STRICTLY CONTROLLED BECAUSE CONFERENCE SITE IS RENTED TO OTHER GROUPS EACH EVENING. THIS FORMAT, WHICH COULD BE CHANGED, WILL GIVE CONFERENCE ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE AND CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN JAMES CALLAGHAN EVEN MORE AUTHORITY THAN USUAL. IT IS NOT, HOWEVER, DESIGNED TO MOLLIFY THE LEFT-WING. PARTY MODERATES ARE COUNTING ON LIMITED TIME AVAILABLE AND STRICT SCREENING OF "EMERGENCY RESOLUTIONS" TO LIMIT EMBARRASSMENT TO GOVERNMENT. SCHEDULED SPEAKERS ARE: CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN CALLAGHAN, NOVEMBER 27; PRIME MINISTER WILSON, NOVEMBER 28; AND GERMAN FRATERNAL DELEGATE, CONFIDENTIAL

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CHANCELLOR HELMUT SCHMIDT, NOVEMBER 30.

3. WHILE QUESTION OF PLP OR LABOR PARTY SUPREMACY, AS IT RELATES TO PARTY STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION, IS LIKELY TO MONOPOLIZE CONFERENCE DELEGATES' TIME, EEC WILL BE THE MOST IMPORTANT AND CONTENTIOUS SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE AT CONFERENCE, AND WE ANTICIPATE APPROVAL OF RESOLUTIONS COMMITTING PARTY TO REFERENDUM AND TO SPECIAL CONFERENCE

TO DETERMINE PARTY POSITION ON REFERENDUM. THE LEFT WILL
SEEK TO REDUCE THE GOVERNMENT'S ROOM TO MANEUVER ON BOTH
POINTS. OTHER ISSUES LIKELY TO SURFACE IN FORM OF
EMERGENCY RESOLUTIONS INCLUDE: TERRORISM; SOCIAL CONTRACT
; DEFENSE REVIEW; SOUTH AFRICA; CHILE; AND LOCAL ISSUES
SUCH AS CLAY CROSS COUNCILLORS (REF A).

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